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18 November 1963

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

*Iraq: (Information as of 0500 EST) The Iraqi Army, under the leadership of President Abd al-Salim Arif, this morning ousted the Baathist regime. A military junta has assumed all powers and has ordered dissolution of the national guard--the Baath's paramilitary organ. All army units apparently have aligned themselves with the new regime.

Army units in Baghdad met with resistance from national guardsmen and sporadic firing continued throughout the morning. Heavy firing was heard in Basra early in the day.

Baath founder Michel Aflaq and Syrian Army strongman Amin al-Hafiz, as well as leaders of Baath branches in Jordan and Lebanon, have been caught in Baghdad by the coup.

The Syrian Baathist regime, whose existence is likely to be seriously jeopardized by the coup, has placed the army on the alert. However, non-Baathist elements in the army are likely to be encouraged to attempt the regime's overthrow. The Baath's cofounder Salah al-Din Bitar has assumed power in Damascus.

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South Vietnam: The new military rulers are beginning to run into difficulties in forming a political base.

Statements by General Le Van Tat, leading returned Cao Dai exile, suggest that politico-religious sects may put conditions on their providing active support. Various sect leaders may hope to revive their once-autonomous armies.

The military are already considering moves to curb the lack of restraint evident in the newly freed South Vietnamese press. An information ministry official has stated that, while there will be no pre-publication censorship, papers which repeatedly print untrue or harmful stories will be closed down.

25X1 [redacted] morale in the security services has fallen as a result of new appointments made by national police director General Xuan. On the other hand, a tighter chain of command in the armed forces, long sought unsuccessfully under Diem, is apparently going into effect.)

USSR-Berlin: (Moscow has taken another step to induce the West to engage in bargaining about Berlin access procedures.)

(The Soviet reply of 16 November to the 29 October Allied communications on harmonized autobahn procedures in effect rejected them and denied the Western right to establish any such procedures.)

(This response, delivered to representatives of the Allied military liaison missions, reiterated earlier remarks of Foreign Minister Gromyko by insisting that a 29 June 1945 meeting of Allied commanders in chief "exactly established" that Soviet military representatives "control" the passage of persons and goods of Allied forces through Soviet checkpoints.)

(The chief of the Soviet military liaison mission then read a statement setting forth Moscow's procedures on the autobahn. Its principal point is that "verification of personnel is allowed in the vehicles if the sum total does not exceed an average of two or three men per vehicle not including drivers." Otherwise troops will be expected to dismount. Verification in the vehicles can be made with tailgates down or tailgates up if a count can be made under the latter condition.)

(In an effort to stress Soviet firmness on the issue of autobahn procedures, Gromyko told the Danish foreign minister on 14 November that "we will not give in." Gromyko presumably expected that his remark would be passed to Allied officials.)

(The French have scheduled a convoy of 10 vehicles and 27 passengers for 19 November. This convoy would not have to dismount under the proposed Soviet criteria or under the criteria established by the West.)

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Cuba: Old-line Cuban Communists evidently are to remain in charge of Cuba's foundering agricultural programs.

Carlos Rafael Rodriguez has been given cabinet rank as president of a reorganized National Agrarian Reform Institute (INRA), and Severo Aguirre Cristo has been appointed first deputy minister under him. Both were leaders of the prerevolutionary Communist party of Cuba for more than 20 years before Castro came to power. Both are members of the national directorate of Castro's political machine, the United Party of the Socialist Revolution.

Rodriguez became president of INRA, then an autonomous government agency, in February 1962, and shortly thereafter Aguirre was named to an INRA post with responsibility for livestock production. Rodriguez has always been closer to Castro than any of the other veteran Cuban Communists.

It may have been the inability of another veteran Cuban Communist, Juan Marinello, to adjust to Castro's leadership that led to his demotion earlier this month. Marinello, who was president of the prerevolutionary Communist party, was removed as rector of Havana University and sent to Paris as Cuban UNESCO representative.

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Burma: Ne Win has broken off peace negotiations with the Communist insurgents and is now cracking down on pro-Communist elements.

In ending the two-month-old talks, Ne Win has accused the Communists of "not being sincere and honest in their desire for peace." Earlier reports stated that the government had balked at two Communist demands--the creation of a "Peoples Democracy" modeled on Communist states, and self-determination with right of secession for ethnic minorities. The Communists have urged the government to reconsider and continue the talks.

Over 300 members of the pro-Communist National United Front and its affiliated organizations have been arrested since 15 November. This group angered Ne Win by alleging that the government would be responsible for any breakdown in peace talks. The group has been charged with using recent mass demonstrations to try to force concessions to the Communist insurgents.

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Ne Win has frequently stated that he would launch a major military campaign against insurgents of all kinds if the talks failed.

Argentina: The explanatory clauses of the 16 November decrees annulling Argentina's petroleum contracts argue that there is ample legal precedent for taking this action by executive decree.

The decrees strongly emphasize the long-held contention of Illia's party that the Frondizi government used illegal procedures in negotiating the contracts and approving them by executive decree, and argue they can be canceled by decree. Illia's procedures are likely to evoke criticism even among some opponents of the contracts, who favored a prior court hearing.

The decrees express an intention to proceed according to law in settling accounts with the companies, and Argentina has a good record in this respect. They also explain that the government favors foreign investment in industry, commerce, and agriculture even though it believes that basic resources, such as petroleum, must be developed by the state. Nevertheless, the phraseology of the decrees is clearly designed to comfort the nationalists.

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Laos: In talks held on 16 November in the Plaine des Jarres, neutralist military leader Kong Le and Pathet Lao General Singkapo agreed on measures to "create a favorable atmosphere" for a new meeting between Premier Souvanna Phouma and Pathet Lao leader Souphannouvong. A cease-fire is to be declared between neutralist and Pathet Lao forces on the Plaine, and further preparatory talks have been scheduled.

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The Special Assistant for National Security Affairs

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The Director of the Budget

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The Department of State

The Secretary of State

The Under Secretary of State

The Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

The Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

The Counselor and Chairman of the Policy Planning Council

The Director of Intelligence and Research

The Treasury Department

The Secretary of the Treasury

The Under Secretary of the Treasury

The Department of Defense

The Secretary of Defense

The Deputy Secretary of Defense

The Secretary of the Army

The Secretary of the Navy

The Secretary of the Air Force

The Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs)

The Assistant Secretary of Defense

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Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

Chief of Staff, United States Army

Commandant, United States Marine Corps

U.S. Rep., Military Committee and Standing Group, NATO

Supreme Allied Commander, Europe

Commander in Chief, Pacific

Commander in Chief, Atlantic

The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

The Director, The Joint Staff

The Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

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